

achieved by all. Nepal can hopefully now travel down the path of peace, stability and prosperity.

I commend the efforts of the leaders of that nation who focused on the greater good of the people of Nepal, and I urge them to continue to move forward.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to my good friend the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), a distinguished member of the International Relations Committee.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in permitting me to speak on this and his leadership in bringing it forward with my friend and colleague, the chairman of our subcommittee.

Mr. Speaker, oftentimes there is so much work that transpires in the course of the International Relations Committee dealing with things that are too far removed from the world's viewpoint at any given time.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from New York introducing this legislation. He brings to this debate the experience of somebody who not only was a Peace Corps volunteer years ago, but continues his interest and concern, although not a member of the committee, somebody who has repeatedly brought his attention and expertise and interest. And that is what I think is the strength of what we can do in this Chamber: having the strength that comes from people who have the experience, the concern, use this platform to be able to focus the attention in this country and around the world on these things that seemingly are minor on the world stage. But given the devastation that has been incurred on this small country, the loss of life, the upset, the loss of progress, being able to look at an opportunity like this, it is not just for Nepal, but it seems to me it is a demonstration of taking some of these intractable issues around the world and indicate that there are opportunities for hope.

I just appreciate Congressman WALSH bringing this forward. I know he has had some other experience in the past looking at other modest conundrums, like in Northern Ireland, where his follow-through and his commitment makes a difference, and it is part of the richness of the experience here in foreign affairs.

I hope that this is something as we move forward to a new session, that we will be able to keep the focus, the direction and the attention, because coming out of what we see in Iraq, we are going to need more than ever opportunities to find areas of agreement and to reinforce the positive aspects of diplomacy.

I appreciate again the opportunity to speak in support of this and strongly urge my colleagues to not just support this, but this is something where people think about ways that they can help spread this word for this important work.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, but I wish to take a bit of time to express my own deep admiration for my dear friend from Iowa, whose brilliance and decency and commitment we shall miss more than any of us can express.

During an extraordinarily distinguished, rich, impressive service, Congressman LEACH has brought to this body intellectual equipment, integrity, a passionate commitment to the Congress, and he will be sorely and deeply missed by all of us on both sides of the aisle.

On behalf of all of my colleagues on the Democratic side, I want to express our admiration, our respect and our friendship for him, and wish him the very best in what I am sure will be exciting future endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I thank very much my distinguished friend, and I wish him every great success as he takes on the leadership of this committee in this coming Congress. We all have a vested interest in the Congress doing well and the country moving forward.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Nepalese democracy. I would like to commend my colleague from New York, Mr. WALSH, for introducing this important bill and appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of it today.

The Nepalese people, like all people, deserve to live in a country free from conflict and to be represented by democratically elected officials. These elected leaders need to create a professional, non-political military force that can adequately deal with the Maoist rebels who have been destabilizing the country for so long. Currently as a result of the Maoist rule, nearly one third of the Nepalese people live below the poverty line; if the government of Nepal doesn't live up to its moral obligation to effectively govern many more will fall into destitution.

To those citizens who are fighting for democracy through non-violent methods, by standing up grass-roots organizations and educating people on the benefits of a free society, I say keep up the good work. Continue working to ensure freedom of the press and that the rights of all citizens are respected and not abused.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working in the future with Mr. WALSH and the other cosponsors of this bill to ensure that Congress focuses on democratic progress throughout the world.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WAMP). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1051, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mrs. CAPITO, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-720) on the resolution (H. Res. 1096) waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO RELIEF, SECURITY, AND DEMOCRACY PROMOTION ACT OF 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate Bill (S. 2125) to promote relief, security, and democracy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 2125

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006".

TITLE I—BILATERAL ACTION ON ADDRESSING URGENT NEEDS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

SEC. 101. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The National Security Strategy of the United States, dated September 17, 2002, concludes that "[i]n Africa, promise and opportunity sit side-by-side with disease, war, and desperate poverty. This threatens both a core value of the United States preserving human dignity and our strategic priority combating global terror. American interests and American principles, therefore, lead in the same direction: we will work with others for an African continent that lives in liberty, peace, and growing prosperity."

(2) On February 16, 2005, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency testified, "In Africa, chronic instability will continue to hamper counterterrorism efforts and pose heavy humanitarian and peacekeeping burdens."

(3) According to the United States Agency for International Development, "Given its size, population, and resources, the Congo is an important player in Africa and of long-term interest to the United States."

(4) The Democratic Republic of the Congo is 2,345,410 square miles (approximately ¼ the size of the United States), lies at the heart of Africa, and touches every major region of sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, a secure, peaceful, and prosperous Democratic Republic of the Congo would have a profound impact on progress throughout Africa.

(5) The most recent war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which erupted in 1998,

spawned some of the world's worst human rights atrocities and drew in six neighboring countries.

(6) Despite the conclusion of a peace agreement and subsequent withdrawal of foreign forces in 2003, both the real and perceived presence of armed groups hostile to the Governments of Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi continue to serve as a major source of regional instability and an apparent pretext for continued interference in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by its neighbors.

(7) A mortality study completed in December 2004 by the International Rescue Committee found that 31,000 people were dying monthly and 3,800,000 people had died in the previous six years because of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and resulting disintegration of the social service infrastructure, making this one of the deadliest conflicts since World War II.

(8) In 2004, Amnesty International estimated that at least 40,000 women and girls were systematically raped and tortured in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1998, and nearly two-thirds of ongoing abuses against women and girls are perpetrated by members of the security forces, particularly the Forces Armes de la Republique Democratique du Congo (FARDC) and the Police Nationale Congolaise (PNC).

(9) According to the Department of State, "returning one of Africa's largest countries [the Democratic Republic of the Congo] to full peace and stability will require significant United States investments in support of national elections, the reintegration of former combatants, the return and reintegration of refugees and [internally displaced persons], establishment of central government control over vast territories, and promotion of national reconciliation and good governance".

SEC. 102. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to help promote, reinvigorate, and support the political process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to press all parties in the Transitional National Government and the succeeding government to implement fully and to institutionalize mechanisms, including national and international election observers, fair and transparent voter registration procedures, and a significant civic awareness and public education campaign created for the July 30, 2006, elections and future elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to ensure that elections are carried out in a fair and democratic manner;

(2) to urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to recognize and act upon its responsibilities to immediately bring discipline to its security forces, hold those individuals responsible for atrocities and other human rights violations, particularly the rape of women and girls as an act of war, accountable and bring such individuals to justice;

(3) to help ensure that, once a stable national government is established in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is committed to multiparty democracy, open and transparent governance, respect for human rights and religious freedom, ending the violence throughout the country, promoting peace and stability with its neighbors, rehabilitating the national judicial system and enhancing the rule of law, combating corruption, instituting economic reforms to promote development, and creating an environment to promote private investment;

(4) to assist the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as it seeks to meet the basic needs of its citizens, including security, safety, and access to health care, education, food, shelter, and clean drinking water;

(5) to support security sector reform by assisting the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to establish a viable and professional national army and police force that respects human rights and the rule of law, is under effective civilian control, and possesses a viable presence throughout the entire country, provided the Democratic Republic of the Congo meets all requirements for United States military assistance under existing law;

(6) to help expedite planning and implementation of programs associated with the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration, and rehabilitation process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(7) to support efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and other entities, as appropriate, to disarm, demobilize, and repatriate the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda and other illegally armed groups;

(8) to make all efforts to ensure that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo—

(A) is committed to responsible and transparent management of natural resources across the country; and

(B) takes active measures—

(i) to promote economic development;

(ii) to hold accountable individuals who illegally exploit the country's natural resources; and

(iii) to implement the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative by enacting laws requiring disclosure and independent auditing of company payments and government receipts for natural resource extraction;

(9) to promote a viable civil society and to enhance nongovernmental organizations and institutions, including religious organizations, the media, political parties, trade unions, and trade and business associations, that can act as a stabilizing force and effective check on the government;

(10) to help rebuild and enhance infrastructure, communications, and other mechanisms that will increase the ability of the central government to manage internal affairs, encourage economic development, and facilitate relief efforts of humanitarian organizations;

(11) to help halt the high prevalence of sexual abuse and violence perpetrated against women and children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and mitigate the detrimental effects from acts of this type of violence by undertaking a number of health, education, and psycho-social support programs;

(12) to work aggressively on a bilateral basis to urge governments of countries contributing troops to the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to enact and enforce laws on trafficking in persons and sexual abuse that meet international standards, promote codes of conduct for troops serving as part of United Nations peacekeeping missions, and immediately investigate and punish citizens who are responsible for abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(13) to assist the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as undertakes steps to—

(A) protect internally displaced persons and refugees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and border regions from all forms of violence, including gender-based violence and other human rights abuses;

(B) address other basic needs of vulnerable populations with the goal of allowing these conflict-affected individuals to ultimately return to their homes; and

(C) assess the magnitude of the problem of orphans from conflict and HIV/AIDS in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and work to establish a program of national support;

(14) to engage with governments working to promote peace and security throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo and hold accountable individuals, entities, and countries working to destabilize the country; and

(15) to promote appropriate use of the forests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in a manner that benefits the rural population in that country that depends on the forests for their livelihoods and protects national and environmental interests.

SEC. 103. BILATERAL ASSISTANCE TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.

(a) FUNDING FOR FISCAL YEARS 2006 AND 2007.—Of the amounts made available to carry out the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.), the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (68 Stat. 454, chapter 469), and the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2751 et seq.) for fiscal year 2006 and 2007, at least \$52,000,000 for each such fiscal year should be allocated for bilateral assistance programs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

(b) FUTURE YEAR FUNDING.—It is the sense of Congress that the Department of State should submit budget requests in fiscal years 2008 and 2009 that contain increases in bilateral assistance for the Democratic Republic of the Congo that are appropriate if progress is being made, particularly cooperation by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, toward accomplishing the policy objectives described in section 102.

(c) COORDINATION WITH OTHER DONOR NATIONS.—The United States should work with other donor nations, on a bilateral and multilateral basis, to increase international contributions to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and accomplish the policy objectives described in section 102.

SEC. 104. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be committed to achieving the policy objectives described in section 102 if the efforts of the United States and other members of the international community are to be effective in bringing relief, security, and democracy to the country;

(2) the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should immediately exercise control over and discipline its armed forces, stop the mass rapes at the hands of its armed forces, and hold those responsible for these acts accountable before an appropriate tribunal;

(3) the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in collaboration with international aid agencies, should establish expert teams to assess the needs of the victims of rape and provide health, counseling, and social support services that such victims need; and

(4) the international community, through the United Nations peacekeeping mission, humanitarian and development relief, and other forms of assistance, is providing a substantial amount of funding that is giving the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo an opportunity to make progress towards accomplishing the policy objectives described in section 102, but this assistance cannot continue in perpetuity.

(b) TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State should withhold assistance otherwise available under this Act if the Secretary determines that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is not making

sufficient progress towards accomplishing the policy objectives described in section 102.

SEC. 105. WITHHOLDING OF ASSISTANCE.

The Secretary of State is authorized to withhold assistance made available under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.), other than humanitarian, peacekeeping, and counterterrorism assistance, for a foreign country if the Secretary determines that the government of the foreign country is taking actions to destabilize the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

SEC. 106. REPORT ON PROGRESS TOWARD ACCOMPLISHING POLICY OBJECTIVES.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the progress made toward accomplishing the policy objectives described in section 102.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) a description of any major impediments that prevent the accomplishment of the policy objectives described in section 102, including any destabilizing activities undertaken in the Democratic Republic of Congo by governments of neighboring countries;

(2) an evaluation of United States policies and foreign assistance programs designed to accomplish such policy objectives; and

(3) recommendations for—

(A) improving the policies and programs referred to in paragraph (2); and

(B) any additional bilateral or multilateral actions necessary to promote peace and prosperity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

SEC. 107. SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE GREAT LAKES REGION.

Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President should appoint a Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region to help coordinate efforts to resolve the instability and insecurity in Eastern Congo.

TITLE II—MULTILATERAL ACTIONS TO ADDRESS URGENT NEEDS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

SEC. 201. PROMOTION OF UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL.

The United States should use its voice and vote in the United Nations Security Council—

(1) to address exploitation at the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) by continuing to urge, when credible allegations exist, appropriate investigation of alleged perpetrators and, as necessary, prosecution of United Nations personnel responsible for sexual abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(2) to conclude at the earliest possible date a Memorandum of Understanding relating to binding codes of conduct and programs for the prevention of sexual abuse and trafficking in persons to be undertaken by the United Nations for all countries that contribute troops to MONUC, to include the assumption of personal liability for the provision of victims assistance and child support, as appropriate, by those who violate the codes of conduct;

(3) to strengthen the authority and capacity of MONUC by—

(A) providing specific authority and obligation to prevent and effectively counter imminent threats;

(B) clarifying and strengthening MONUC's rules of engagement to enhance the protection of vulnerable civilian populations;

(C) enhancing the surveillance and intelligence-gathering capabilities available to MONUC;

(D) where consistent with United States policy, making available personnel, communications, and military assets that improve the effectiveness of robust peacekeeping, mobility, and command and control capabilities of MONUC; and

(E) providing MONUC with the authority and resources needed to effectively monitor arms trafficking and natural resource exploitation at key border posts and airfields in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(4) to encourage regular visits of the United Nations Security Council to monitor the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(5) to ensure that the practice of recruiting and arming children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is immediately halted pursuant to Security Council Resolutions 1460 (2003) and 1539 (2004);

(6) to strengthen the arms embargo imposed pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1493 (2003) and ensure that violators are held accountable through appropriate measures, including the possible imposition of sanctions;

(7) to allow for the more effective protection and monitoring of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in the eastern part of the country, and for public disclosure and independent auditing of natural resource revenues to help ensure transparent and accountable management of these revenues;

(8) to press countries in the Congo region to help facilitate an end to the violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and promote relief, security, and democracy throughout the region; and

(9) to encourage the United Nations Secretary-General to become more involved in completing the policy objectives described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 102 and ensure that recent fighting in North Kivu, which displaced over 150,000 people, as well as fighting in Ituri and other areas, does not create widespread instability throughout the country.

SEC. 202. INCREASING CONTRIBUTIONS AND OTHER HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President should instruct the United States permanent representative or executive director, as the case may be, to the United Nations voluntary agencies, including the World Food Program, the United Nations Development Program, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and other appropriate international organizations to use the voice and vote of the United States to support additional humanitarian and development assistance for the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to accomplish the policy objectives described in section 102.

(b) SUPPORT CONTINGENT ON PROGRESS.—If the Secretary of State determines that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is not making sufficient progress towards accomplishing the policy objectives described in section 102, the President shall consider withdrawing United States support for the assistance described in subsection (a) when future funding decisions are considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in describing American foreign policy after World War II, General George Marshall said, "Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine, but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit an emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist."

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has seen more than its fair share of hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos. Since 1998, an estimated 4 million people have died as a result of war, famine and disease, and thousands more die each and every day. More than 40,000 women and children have been systematically raped and tortured at the hands of the armed forces of the Congo, perpetrators of genocide from neighboring Rwanda and an increasing intricate array of militia groups.

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Life expectancy in Congo has plummeted to 49 years, and years of war and rampant corruption have decimated an economy that should have been one of Africa's strongest.

Fortunately, hope for an end to the constant conflict and chaos that have plagued the Congo since independence has been raised following the historic elections that took place in July and October of this year. An estimated 70 percent of eligible voters turned out to vote in the face of great difficulties, and international monitors agreed that the election results were uncompromised by irregularities.

But the conduct of elections represent only an initial step towards normalcy. A legitimate result in the October runoff that is accepted by both parties and the population at large is vitally important. Further, the establishment of inclusive political institutions, the restoration of critical infrastructure and essential public services, and the creation of viable economic opportunities for development will be critically important if Congo is to flourish.

During a recent visit to Kinshasa earlier this month, U.N. Under Secretary of Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egelund asserted that "the Congolese people were still suffering one of the world's worst humanitarian crises." Unfortunately, this is a fact that has largely escaped the attention of many of us, particularly as we focus on other well-deserved crises such as that which is occurring in Darfur and northern Uganda and, as a result of U.S. policy towards Congo, really has gone adrift and needs to be re-energized.

S. 2125 recognizes the importance of a coherent, forward-leaning U.S. policy toward the Congo. It identifies key U.S. policies in Congo, including the promotion of free, fair and democratic elections in the future; support for security sector reform and disarmament;

demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation programs; and the promotion of accountability for those who have committed atrocities and gross human rights violations.

It also asserts that the United States will work to ensure that a stable Congolese government is committed to the principles of good governance and resource management, rule of law, and peaceful coexistence with its regional neighbors. The bill suggests that the U.S. partner with other governments with similar goals for the Congo.

Finally, it compels the U.S. to work to strengthen the mandate of the United Nations peacekeeping force in the Congo, MONUC, to include specific authority to prevent and effectively counter imminent threats, protect civilians, enhance intelligence gathering capabilities, and monitor arms trafficking, and of course, also to look into the terrible problem of child soldiers.

S. 2125 further authorizes \$52 million for fiscal years 2006 and 2007, an increase of \$5 million, to carry out these objectives and expresses support for additional funding in future years. However, the bill makes it clear that U.S. assistance to Congo cannot continue in perpetuity. It calls on the Secretary of State to withhold such assistance if the government is not making sufficient progress towards accomplishing the stated U.S. foreign policy goals.

Mr. Speaker, this is a timely bill. While providing a road map for U.S. policy towards Congo during this critical stage in its transition, it rightly places the burden of success on the Congolese themselves. After all, solutions for Congo's ills cannot be imposed from the outside. The Congolese themselves must seize the opportunity for peace and prosperity that is before them. Still, this bill helps support them in that effort.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in strong support of this legislation.

I would first like to thank my good friend Senator BARAK OBAMA for introducing this important and timely measure. I would also like to congratulate the people of the Congo for successfully holding their first free and fair elections in four decades, as well as the victor of this election, Laurent Kabila.

While the elections were a historic milestone, the euphoria is sobered by the painful and disastrous wars of the past. In fact, for the past 40 years, the people of the Congo have known nothing but dictatorship, tyranny, corruption, poverty and war.

Congo is one of Africa's poorest countries. It is the eighth poorest country in the entire world based on gross domestic product. Congo, a country the size of all of Western Europe, has less than 300 miles of paved road. Most of the country has no electricity, proper

sanitation and, most importantly, no safe water.

The United Nations estimates that 4 million people died in the past 8 years as a direct result of war. To give you another stark look at the situation in the Congo, Mr. Speaker, the International Rescue Committee reports that 31,000 people are dying each month, or about 1,000 human beings every single day.

The Congo is in the midst of a humanitarian catastrophe that has not yet received the high-level attention or the adequate resources it desperately deserves. The United Nations announced recently that it was running out of money to feed some of the 1.7 million displaced Congolese who urgently needed aid.

Mr. Speaker, the children of Congo have suffered immeasurable pain as a result of war, poverty and disease. Children as young as 10 were recruited as child soldiers into the ranks of the guerrilla forces. Unprotected children as young as five or six work in some of Congo's most prosperous mines for about \$1 a day.

According to UNICEF, more than 600 Congolese children die every single day, and even more are displaced, sexually abused or victimized by abduction as child soldiers.

An estimated 1 million Congolese are living with HIV/AIDS, but no one can realistically know for sure. The country has only seven doctors per 100,000 people, and life expectancy is in the low 40s.

Mr. Speaker, Congo has a long and difficult road to recovery, but with their commitment and our support they can make it.

The country has enormous natural resources. In terms of its untapped mineral wealth, it is one of the richest countries in the world. Its soil is expected to contain every mineral listed on the periodic table. Large deposits of gold, copper, cobalt, diamond, gas and oil still remain untapped.

The Congo River has the second largest flow on Earth after the Amazon and is the second longest river in Africa after the Nile. The estimated hydroelectric potential has the capacity to provide electrical power to the entire continent of Africa.

Congo is home to the world's second largest tropical rain forest, with nearly 20 percent of the planet's remaining rain forests. The Congo Basin represents 70 percent of the African continent's plant cover, with over 600 tree species and 10,000 animal species.

In short, Mr. Speaker, Congo has the potential to turn that enormous natural wealth into a rich and prosperous nation, if properly managed under the stewardship of a free economy and a transparent, noncorrupt and stable democracy.

The bill that we are voting on today is an important step on the long road towards bringing peace and prosperity to the Congo.

Our bill establishes 14 core principles of U.S. policy across a wide range of

issues. It authorizes a 25 percent increase in U.S. assistance for the Congo. It calls for a special envoy to help resolve the situation in eastern Congo, and it urges the administration to use its voice and its vote at the United Nations Security Council to strengthen the U.N. peacekeeping force that is providing some security in parts of the Congo.

Major faith-based and humanitarian nongovernmental organizations, including some with extensive field operations in Congo, have endorsed our legislation, including CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Global Witness, International Crisis Group, International Rescue Committee, and Oxfam America.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stress that we are under no illusion that enacting the policies in this bill will be a panacea for Congo's many ills. But we know that we cannot accept the status quo, particularly not for Congo's children.

Mr. Speaker, the Congo, Africa's heart of darkness, need not languish forever in its current state, decades of poverty, death and grief, midst an enormous amount of natural wealth.

We can help move them on the path towards a bright and prosperous future.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote in support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER), the distinguished chairman of the Rules Committee.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding, and I want to congratulate my classmate and dear friend from New Jersey and also the gentleman from California, my friend and neighbor, soon-to-be-chairman of the International Relations Committee.

I also want to start by doing exactly what my friend from California did, and that is extend congratulations to Senator BARAK OBAMA, who really authored and has been pushing S. 2125 for a long period of time. I have had numerous conversations with him about this, and we talked about the need to ensure that as we look at the military challenges that we face, the promotion of democratization, political pluralism, the rule of law, the building of these democratic institutions, while at the same time we focus on the very important security needs, is a priority for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

This is, as Mr. LANTOS has said, a country that for four decades has gone through a tumultuous history. Nearly 2 decades ago, I had the opportunity to visit with President Mobutu Sese-Seko in Kinshasa, and then went to Boundji, which was his birthplace. I will never forget how horrified we were seeing the tremendous resources about which my friend spoke utilized to basically build a shrine to this man at his birthplace.

It is a country that has gone through tremendous human rights violations.

As section 102 of this act points out, since 1998 40,000 women and children have been brutally raped in large part by those involved in security for the country. I believe that it is essential for us to take this very small amount of money and do everything that we can in our quest to make sure that that four-decade history is history and that it never repeats itself at all. I believe that this measure which enjoys strong bipartisan support can send a signal.

I am very pleased to work closely with my colleague from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) with our House Democracy Assistance Commission. I am going to be speaking about that on the next measure we bring forward, but I happen to believe as we look at the House Democracy Assistance Commission in its effort to build up parliaments in emerging, new and reemerging democracies, it is important for us to look at countries that will be natural partners of ours in this quest to build these parliaments. I think that the Democratic Republic of the Congo, along with Kenya, which we are working with on the continent of Africa, and Liberia will potentially be a prime candidate for us to partner with in building that, and I know I will be working with Mr. PRICE on that in the coming months.

This measure is a very important first step, and I join in congratulating the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo for taking that step towards free and fair elections and look forward to their continued success and obviously this multilateral approach which the act calls for, getting other countries involved, will I believe go a long way towards helping them.

I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 2125, the "Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006."

Three years after the end of "Africa's World War" and having conducted the most logistically complicated election in history, the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, faces its best chance for peace and progress since independence. However, credible mortality studies estimate that over 1,000 people continue to die each day from conflict-related causes, mostly disease and malnutrition, and pervasive state weakness threatens backsliding and a return to wide-spread violence. The international community has played a critical role in supporting the DRC until this point, and with the inauguration of the new democratically elected government, such support will be even more important going forward.

I am particularly proud of the role played by Lisa Shannon, a constituent of mine and the founder of Run for Congo Women. After learning about the Congo on Oprah, Lisa decided to do a solo, 31 mile run on Portland's Wildwood Trail to raise money for Women for Women International's work in Congo. Just over a year later, Run for Congo Women has blossomed into a global effort to raise awareness and support the women of the DRC. Lisa has tirelessly walked the halls of Congress to promote the bill we're passing today and is a shining example of the difference that one committed individual can make.

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Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, we have no additional requests for time. We yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, we likewise yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WAMP). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 2125, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR LEBANON'S DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1088) expressing support for Lebanon's democratic institutions and condemning the recent terrorist assassination of Lebanese parliamentarian and Industry Minister Pierre Amin Gemayel.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 1088

Whereas on November 21, 2006 Pierre Gemayel, a Member of the March 14 parliamentary coalition, was assassinated in New Jdeide, north of Beirut, Lebanon;

Whereas a series of targeted attacks and killings of public leaders working to promote democracy and autonomy in Lebanon has placed a heavy toll on Lebanon's intellectual and democratic freedoms;

Whereas the prosecution by the proposed International Independent Investigation Commission of persons accused in the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri could deter future assassinations;

Whereas Pierre Gemayel was born on September 24, 1972 into a prominent Lebanese family;

Whereas Pierre Gemayel was first elected to the Lebanese Parliament in 2000;

Whereas Pierre Gemayel was named Minister of Industry in the Lebanese Government in 2005;

Whereas Amine Gemayel, the father of Pierre Gemayel and former President of Lebanon, has urged the Phalange party supporters and all Lebanese citizens to promote cooperation and solidarity and hamper attempts to instigate civil strife;

Whereas, on November 21, 2006, following Pierre Gemayel's assassination, President George W. Bush stated that "the United States remains fully committed to supporting Lebanon's independence and democracy in the face of attempts by Syria, Iran, and their allies within Lebanon to foment instability and violence";

Whereas supporting the development of democratic institutions in Lebanon is critical to promoting the interests of the United States in the Middle East region, building upon the momentum of the March 14, 2005 "Cedar Revolution," fighting terrorism, and supporting negotiations for peace in the region; and

Whereas the House Democracy Assistance Commission has worked in partnership with the Lebanese Parliament to strengthen its

institutional capacity, and met with Pierre Gemayel during the Commission's delegation to Lebanon in July 2006: Now, therefore be it Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) Expresses its condolences for this heinous crime to the people of Lebanon and to the members of Lebanon's Cabinet in which Pierre Gemayel served with distinction;

(2) Affirms its support for the international tribunal to try suspects in the 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri;

(3) Urges that the perpetrators of the assassination of Pierre Gemayel be brought to justice;

(4) Conveys concern regarding the increasing polarization of Lebanon's religious sects and calls on the Government of Lebanon to actively pursue electoral reform as a first step in reducing confessional tensions;

(5) Recognizes that a regional peace in the Middle East will greatly contribute to Lebanon's long-term security and stability; and

(6) Reaffirms the commitment of the United States to support and promote the development of autonomous, effective democratic institutions in Lebanon, including an independent Parliament and a strong central government that represent and serve the interests of the Lebanese people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 1088, expressing support for Lebanon's democratic institutions and condemning the recent assassinations of Lebanese parliamentarian and Industry Minister Pierre Amin Gemayel.

Mr. Gemayel's brutal murder serves as yet another example of the Syria regime's pattern of assassinations of Lebanese dissidents and political figures who seek full Lebanese sovereignty and independence from nefarious outside forces as Syria and Iran.

This resolution appropriately urges those responsible for Mr. Gemayel's murder to be brought to justice and expresses condolences to the people of Lebanon for his death.

The resolution reiterates our commitment for a fully sovereign independent Lebanon, and calls on the Lebanese Government to implement the necessary electoral reforms for Lebanon to achieve such autonomy, develop its democratic institutions, and help reduce the increasing sectarian divisions.

Mr. Gemayel's murder was a deplorable act of cowardice aimed at undermining Lebanon's sovereignty and destroying its democratic institutions. It should move the United Nations to once and for all hold Syria accountable for the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Responsible nations must realize that Syria and Iran kill, destroy, and seek instability in places like Lebanon so that they may gain yet more power and influence in the region. We must not allow this to continue.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.